

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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R 232028Z FEB 78 ZFD
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5888
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 05884

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, EG, CY
SUBJECT: EGYPT BREAKS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CYPRUS

REF: (A)CAIRO 5678 NOTAL, (B)CAIRO 5689 NOTAL,
- (C) CAIRO 5761 NOTAL

1. MINSTATE BOUTROS GHALI, WHO HAS FOR PAST FOUR DAYS BEEN ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY PREOCCUPIED IN DEALING WITH CYPRUS PROBLEM, CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR TODAY THAT GOE HAS BROKEN ALL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CYPRUS. GHALI HAD MET WITH CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR SOTERIADES LAST EVENING AND SO INFORMED HIM. HE HAD ASKED SOTERIADES TO CLOSE CYPRIOT EMBASSY IN CAIRO AND CYPRIOT CONSULATE IN ALEXANDRIA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. (THIS CONFIRMS STORIES IN TODAY'S EGYPTIAN PRESS THAT RELATIONS HAVE BEEN SEVERED.)

2. GHALI EXPRESSED PERSONAL REGRET THAT IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO GO THIS FAR. HE INDICATED THAT HIS RECOMMENDATION TO PRESIDENT SADAT HAD BEEN SIMPLY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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SUSPEND RELATIONS AND SEND AMBASSADORS HOME. SADAT, HOWEVER, HAD TAKEN THE CYPRIOT ACTION AS PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL AFFRONTS AND HAD INSTRUCTED THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BE BROKEN. THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE NOW EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF HAVING ONE OR TWO OFFICIALS REMAIN IN EACH OTHER'S CAPITALS AS INTERESTS SECTIONS.

3. LIKE ALL SENIOR EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS TO WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN, GHALI WAS CONSIDERABLY EXERCISED ABOUT THE LARNACA INCIDENT. HE TOO PROFESSED TO BE CONVINCED THAT FIRING ON THE EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS HAD BEEN CONTRIVED. PERHAPS KYPRIANOU AND EVEN LYSSARIDES MAY NOT HAVE BEEN IN ON IT, BUT HE THOUGHT CYPRIOT POLICE AND NATIONAL GUARD OFFICIALS HAD BEEN INVOLVED. GHALI DISPUTED THE CYPRIOT CONTENTION THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS WERE ABOARD, NOTING THAT IN ADDITION TO DIRECT TELEPHONIC CONTACTS, THE TWO SECURITY SERVICES HAVE LONG HAD DIRECT COOPERATION. HE WAS SURE THAT EVEN IF PRIMIN SALEM DID NOT SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFY COMMANDOS IN HIS TELECON WITH STAVROS, THE DETAILS HAD BEEN MADE KNOWN TO THE APPROPRIATE CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES THROUGH SECURITY SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS. THE INCIDENT HAD BEEN A TRAGEDY, BUT SADAT HAD BEEN RIGHT IN CALLING IT "TREACHERY."

4. CARAMANLIS AND "ALL KINDS OF OTHERS" (UNSPECIFIED) ARE SEEKING TO MEDIATE THE DISPUTE, BUT GHALI SAID AFTER THE CYPRIOT ACTION THERE IS NOTHING TO MEDIATE. EGYPTIAN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD NOT ALLOW GOE TO ACT AS THOUGH THE INCIDENT HAD NEVER OCCURRED, EVEN IF IT WISHED TO DO SO, WHICH IT DOES NOT.

5. RE NICOSIA 496, WE SHARE EMBASSY NICOSIA'S RECOMMENDATION AGAINST ACTING ON GOC REQUEST FOR U.S. INVOLVEMENT
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WITH GOE. AS OUR REPORTING HAS INDICATED, EGYPTIANS HANDLED MATTER CLUMSILY, BUT PROVOCATION WAS GREAT AND CYPRIOT AUTHORITIES DID LITTLE TO INSTILL CONFIDENCE THAT PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS WOULD BE SEVERELY DEALT WITH. U.S. INTERCESSION WITH EGYPT ON THIS MATTER, IN ABSENCE SATISFACTORY CYPRIOT PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS, WOULD BE REGARDED HERE AS GRATUITOUS AND BE RESENTED BY GOE LEADERSHIP FROM PRESIDENT SADAT ON DOWN.
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